

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the existing wildland fire hazards within Cassia County, Idaho, and proposes specific mitigations to reduce the threat of wildfire. Mitigations include homeowner education, fire fighting training and equipment, and hazardous fuels treatments along roadways, railroad tracks, and heavy cheatgrass/brush areas within the seven Fire Protection Districts (FPDs) in the County and the three unprotected areas.

Public participation in prevention education courses, such as FIREWISE, are highly recommended throughout the County. Estimated costs are \$15,000 per course. Annual firefighter training and refresher courses are also recommended for all firefighters in the County at a cost of approximately \$1000 per participant per year.

Due to the rural nature of the majority of Cassia County, fuels treatment programs are one of the most effective wildfire preventive measures that can be undertaken. Because roadways naturally serve as fuelbreaks, fuels treatments (e.g., mowing) alongside roads are recommended throughout the County. A total of 283 miles have been identified alongside roads or property lines throughout the County; the specific locations are shown on the maps contained in this report. Total costs for this treatment is estimated at \$75 to \$100 per linear mile, and treatments should only be necessary once each year. Another 4468 acres of high fuel loads have been identified for fuels reduction activities (e.g., juniper removal, herbicide treatments, native plant seedings) near specific communities within the ACE, Albion, Oakley, and Raft River FPDs. Estimated costs for these one time treatments are around \$2,000,000. Dry hydrants, at a cost of \$750 to \$1000 apiece, and other water sources and refill sites should be developed in the ACE, Albion, and Oakley FPDs, and the well at the Malta fire station should be deepened. New fire stations should be built in the ACE, Oakley, and Rock Creek FPDs, and heated substations for storing equipment at remote locations should be developed in the Minidoka and Raft River FPDs. Each of these facilities is estimated to cost \$250,000. Upgrading the Malta landing field (\$140,000) should be considered to allow that site to be used as a fire fighting staging area. Fire fighting vehicles in much of the County are in need of upgrades or replacement. Light and heavy brush trucks and refill engines are recommended for ACE and Raft River FPDs. Depending on the age of equipment acquired and grants obtained, estimated costs range from \$235,000 to \$475,000 for these vehicles. A Type 4 and a Type 6 wildland engine and a 2000 gallon refill engine are recommended for the Albion FPD and are estimated to cost about \$340,000. A 2000 gallon refill engine and two Type 2 structural engines are recommended for the Oakley FPD at an estimated cost of \$370,000.

Finally, incorporation of portions of currently unprotected areas into existing FPDs, especially those around Raft River, should be considered.